Public Meeting
Boston to Montreal High Speed Rail Feasibility and Planning Study
November 13, 2002
Lowell, Massachusetts

Thirty people attended the public meeting in Lowell, Massachusetts on November 13, 2002. Below is a summary of questions and comments.

Q. I see that you are projecting two different revenue amounts, total revenue and revenue between Boston and Montreal, does this mean there are many intermediate stops?

A. *Yes, a larger percentage of the passengers would not be going the total distance. This is a substantive advantage of rail to air travel.*

Q. Was your assumption of price based on an Acela/first class only service?

A. *The revenue projections did not include a range of fares; everyone paid the same price.*

Q. Did you think your ridership numbers suggested an express service for only the primary cities (Boston, Anderson (Woburn), Manchester, White River, Essex Junction/Burlington and Montreal)?

A. *The study will look at potential station stops in greater detail in Phase II. At first glance the data has not shown wide swings in ridership due to selection of station stops.*

Q. Do you think private rail operators will be supportive of high speed rail if they see how they can benefit financially from real estate development holdings along the corridor?

A. *Private operators have been supportive to the study team.*

Q. Is there a benefit for the state governments to own the railroads rather than private operators?

A. *It would be premature to look at this option. Understanding the cost for improvements for a high speed rail service rather than who would operate it has been the focus of the study.*

Q. What has been the view of the Canadian government on this study?

A. *It has been positive. The study team has been told by Canadian government officials they have been pleased to see the US taking the initiative on an international project.*

Q. Has the government of Quebec contribute money to the study?

A. *Not financially in Phase I. However, Quebec has been supportive of the study in other ways and has been asked to continue support either with a monetary or in-kind contribution in Phase II.*

Q. Has there been any attempt to get former Massachusetts Governor Celluci, now ambassador to Canada, involved in this study?

A. *While Ambassador Cellucci was Governor of Massachusetts he was very supportive of regional rail transportation and supported the submission of the request to have this corridor designated a High Speed Rail Corridor. Since becoming Ambassador to Canada, no official contact has made with the Ambassador but he is on the official project mailing list and as we proceed to later phases of the project it may be more appropriate to enlist the Ambassador's support and assistance.*

Q. The study used the price of 12 cents/mile for auto travel, don't automobiles usually have more than one passenger?

A. *The ridership model for the study had single occupancy.*

Q. Will the total corridor contain commuter or inter-city rail?

A. *No, these options are not included in ridership projections in this study.*

Q. Did the study look at auto-train service?

A. *No.*

Q. Did the study consider a rail link between North and South Stations in Boston to enlarge the pool of passengers?

A. *No. The next phase of the study will look at how to make better connections between the two stations, even without a rail link.*

Q. Is the study team aware of the numerous study documents produced by the MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority) examining capacity improvements at North Station?

A. *The study team knows about these studies and will take advantage of the information.*

Q. Is there a way to reduce curves on the corridor to reduce the projected travel time of 4 hrs and 48 minutes between Boston and Montreal to a more desirable time (4 hours, 15 minutes)?

A. *Yes. The study did not look at reducing curves in this phase. The primary purpose of Phase I was to determine if there was sufficient ridership to examine the corridor in more detail. The next phase will examine what it will cost to build the corridor, including improvements such as eliminating curves so trains can attain higher speeds.*

Q. Have you done cost comparisons for reducing impact of sharp grades and steep curves between Concord and Montpelier?

A. *No, we will look at that in Phase II.*

Q. Did the ridership model calculate stops at all 13 stations?

A. *The model based its ridership predictions on 8 station stops.*

Q. What kind of time would be saved if the service were non-stop?

A. *20 minutes*

Q. Isn't the revenue assumption a little low when you take into account the total number of passengers using the service?

A. *We don't think so when the revenue is adjusted for the majority of the passengers who will be taking shorter, non-through trips.*

Q. What is being done to capture information on the economic benefits that will be produced for communities along the corridor?

A. *The team has not examined potential economic benefits thus far. The purpose of having public meetings in participating states and publicizing the project through the website and the media is to make people aware of proposed service so they can determine the economic impact it may have on their local communities.*

Q. What will be the rail weight of the corridor?

A. *We have looked into that as yet.*

Q. When will Phase II of the study begin?

A. *Hopefully in the first half of 2003.*

Additional Comments:

- *I have been involved with the Sierra Club and am familiar with the positive environmental impacts in the Fall River-New Bedford corridor when an abandoned railroad line was put back into service. In many places culverts and*

other drainage structures had collapsed where vehicles driven over the right-of-way had degraded the railroad bed having negative impact on surrounding wetlands. Improvements to the right-of-way for the railroad restored water flow and movement of wildlife resulting in an improvement to the environment.